



**SOUTH PARK RANGER DISTRICT**  
320 Hwy 285, P.O. Box 219, Fairplay, CO 80440  
(719) 836-2031



***CHRISTMAS TREE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:***

- Q. Do I need a permit to cut a Christmas Tree in the South Park Ranger District?**  
**R. Yes, you must have a permit before you cut a Christmas Tree and be in a legal cutting area.**
- Q. When can I cut my Christmas tree?**  
**R. Beginning November 23<sup>th</sup> through December 24<sup>th</sup>.**
- Q. Where can I cut my Christmas tree?**  
**R. The South Park Ranger District of the Pike National Forest with the exception of: the Jefferson Lake Recreation Area, Eleven Mile Canyon Recreation Area, Windy Ridge Bristlecone Pine Scenic Area, Buffalo Peaks or Lost Creek Wilderness Areas, developed campgrounds, Hayman burned area, other scenic areas or picnic grounds, or anywhere else that is specifically designated for no cutting.**
- Q. Are there other restrictions?**  
**R. All tree trunks must be 6" or less in diameter  
Cut tree 6" or less from ground  
Permits must visible on tree as you leave the cutting area.  
Do not cut trees marked with paint.**
- Q. How do I know I'm on the National Forest?**  
**R. Use a Pike National Forest map to make sure you are on National Forest Lands in the South Park Ranger District. There are private lands within the National Forest boundary and it is your responsibility to make sure you are on National Forest. If there is any doubt in your mind, find another area that is signed as National Forest.**
- Q. Are some areas better than others?**  
**R. For those who are returning to the Denver area, we recommend the Lost Park area (main access County Rd 56) or Michigan Creek area (main access CR 35 and CR 54). For those who like to cut their tree south of Fairplay, we recommend the Buffalo Springs Rd (main access FDR 431), and Thompson Park (main access County Road 18). For those who cut in the southern end of our District, we recommend the National Forest south of Hwy 24 (County Roads 61 and 98). **PROBLEM AREAS** where trespass cutting has occurred are in the Boreas Pass area near Como and the Alma area. If you cut your tree in these areas, more detailed maps may help. Since land ownership is patchy in these areas, it is better to avoid them altogether.**
- Q. What kind of tree makes the best Christmas tree?**  
**R. Opinions vary on what tree is best. Here are some general guidelines:**  
**a. Bristlecone pines ARE NOT RECOMMENDED as a Christmas tree. The wood is very difficult to cut; the needles and cones are covered with sticky resin that will ruin your clothes, your vehicle, your home, and create a fire hazard.**  
**b. Ponderosa pines make fine Christmas trees, however their needles are very long and the cones have sharp bristles.**

- c. Some say that Douglas firs make the best Christmas trees because they have that pleasing Christmas tree shape and fullness. They also possess soft, silky needles that are neither too long or too short.
- d. Lodgepole pines can also make a fine Christmas tree; however, some people claim they are too spindly.
- e. Spruces (Engelmann and Colorado Blue) are prized as beautiful Christmas trees; however, spruces have sharp pointed needles that some people find objectionable.
- f. Subalpine fir can be found at the higher elevations and make excellent trees; however they are not as prevalent as the other species.

**Q.** I only have a 2-wheel drive vehicle. Is there any place I can go for my tree?

**R.** Four-wheel drive and 4WD with chains will get you deeper into the forest but some areas are accessible by 2WD. You may have to hike, snowshoe, or ski in to find the best trees though, since those close to easily accessible roads have been taken over the years. Make a fun day of hiking into the forest to find your tree, but don't get lost.

**Q.** What else do I need to know?

**R.** Dress warmly. Be prepared for changes in weather. Forest roads will not be plowed. We recommend you carry chains and/or use a 4WD vehicle. High clearance may also be necessary. Have a full tank of gas. Pack out your trash. Do not trespass on private property. Be sure to allow plenty of daylight time to find your tree; it gets dark by 4:30 as Christmas approaches.

*Tip: A good place to look for a Christmas tree is beneath older stands of aspen. There are usually lots of Engelmann spruces growing in the shade of aspen stands.*

**PLEASE CONSULT THE MAP FOR THE BEST AREAS TO FIND AND CUT YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE.** If you have further questions, please call the office at (719) 836-2031.

*Remember us next year!  
If you like the South Park Ranger District  
Christmas Tree Program we offer:*

- *district-wide tree cutting (with minimal prohibited areas)*
- *cutting dates from November 23<sup>th</sup> through December 24<sup>th</sup>*
  - *more types of trees to choose from*
- *Rocky Mountain Nature Association 15% off Christmas sale (November 27 through December 12)*

***\*\*Don't want to come all the way to Fairplay to buy your permit on the day you cut? You can send a mail-in request for your permit. Send check or money order (marked "Holiday Trees") for the number of trees you want. We will mail the permit out to you and you can cut your tree at your convenience during the allotted dates.***